

Light

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Christmas Greetings

To all our Readers, Contributors and Advertisers we extend our heartfelt thanks for their support and our warmest good wishes for their happiness this Christmastide.

NOTES BY THE WAY

THE COSMIC CHRISTMAS

AS Mrs. F. E. Leaning pointed out, in an article written for LIGHT some years ago, although the actual birthday of Jesus did not take place on the 25th of December, yet, as His day for remembrance, it is well celebrated at the mid-point of the long, starry Arctic night, the true birth-time of the solar year. Many times have we been told that the festival dates back as far as man can compute time, and as Mrs. Besant says (*Esoteric Christianity*, p. 164): "The profound verities touching the divine and the human spirit were as much truths twenty thousand years before Jesus was born in Palestine as after He was born." That all the ancient solemnities and joys that have ever centred round a Virgin and her Babe, in no matter what religion, should converge here, does not make our own less sacred, "so that the Christmas bells are ringing throughout human history, and sound musically out of the far-off night of time."

* * *

SIR OLIVER LODGE AND WIRELESS

THE late Sir William Barrett often maintained that had Sir Oliver Lodge not been too much occupied with his work at Liverpool University College to make the necessary demonstrations of his early discoveries in connection with wireless, his name might have stood before that of Marconi, as being first in the field. He had already exhibited at the Royal Institution and the Society of Telegraph Engineers a compact "pocket" Hertz receiver and had demonstrated the possibility of actual Morse signalling at a lecture before the British Association, both in 1894. Sir Oliver, however, did not grudge to the Italian experimenter the honour of being the first to develop to a practical degree for use in telegraphy the original discovery by Hertz of the "waves" which were at first and still are known by his name—"Hertzian waves." Sir Oliver gives the whole story in his latest book *Past Years*, relating his experiments and those of his fellow-experimenters, in which some famous names are mentioned—Branly, Clerk-Maxwell, Hughes, Fitzgerald, de Forest, Armstrong and Meissner amongst others. Real selective "tuning" became possible through an apparatus or device patented by Sir Oliver in 1897. It was Marconi and his co-workers who found

A SONG FOR THE SEASON

Ye who have borne the harrowing of the years,
And the fell host of fears,
That like gaunt wolves came ravening at your hearts :
Forget your griefs and smarts—
Though they be multitudinous and sore—
But for a little space, and turn once more
Ere yet the time departs
To greet the Christmas angel at your door.

Like a fair maid comes Noël, glimmering white,
Star-crowned and shod with light,
Seeking from sordid cares your souls to win ;
Hushing awhile the din
Of hucksters clamouring in the market place ;
Bringing a gift of melody and grace,
That peace may enter in
From those high realms where dwells the immortal race.

The hours are hallowed now and it may be
Some heavenly alchemy
Shall your harsh woes to secret joys transmute,
And swiftly substitute
For the black raven some celestial dove ;
Raise the low thoughts of earth to things above ;
Clothe the bare boughs with fruit,
And turn the love of gold into the gold of Love.

D.G.

that the electric waves travel round the earth instead of going out into space in a straight line. This is due to the ionisation of an upper stratum of the earth atmosphere, known as the "Heaviside layer." As between Lodge and Marconi we are rather reminded of Darwin's discovery of the origin of species at the same time as Russel Wallace had reached a like conclusion, but magnanimously allowed Darwin the pride of place as discoverer.

* * *

DANIEL DEFOE IN PSYCHIC LITERATURE

SOME years ago we referred to Defoe's account of the "Apparition of Mrs. Veal to Mrs. Bargrave," a ghost story many times quoted, and well known to all students of ghost-lore. We did not regard it as one which could safely be included in psychic annals, for it was classed by authorities as an effort of Defoe's brilliant imagination, like the *Journal of the Plague Year*. By consequence, in giving a series of old-fashioned ghost-stories a few years since (LIGHT, May to September, 1924) we omitted this particular example. And now we learn from an article by Mr. Desmond MacCarthy in the *Sunday Times* that it is certain that the story of Mrs. Veal which Sir Walter Scott regarded "as a *tour de force* of invention was really an able piece of actual reporting." This is distinctly interesting, for the story, which we had read more than once, impressed as genuine, although we could not adopt it, for the reason given. We find it easier to believe in its authenticity, because of another book which came out in 1732, under the sponsorship of Defoe. It is the *Secret Memoirs of the late Duncan Campbell*, the autobiography of a clairvoyant who practised in the West End of London in those days. There is no doubt about the genuineness of that book, a copy of which we possess, and Defoe's part of the book strongly supported Mr. Campbell's account of his supernormal powers, amounting to what we should now call clairvoyant and clairaudient mediumship.

THE INJURED STARLING AND THE MAN

By CAPT. Q. C. A. CRAUFURD, R.N.

A SHORT time ago some urchins, knowing of my eccentricities, brought round an injured starling to see if I would give them sixpence for it. They told me it could not fly and they had caught it.

Now, this starling was quite a youngster, but it was full grown and would therefore be very difficult to deal with.

Starlings are a particularly nervy people, they sense the flock instinct in a marvellous way, as anyone can observe by watching them in flight all turning together as in one movement. I put this down to telepathy or communication of thought from a leader.

Anyhow, here was a little assistant for my laboratory, all wires and ginger. I knew him well as a type, an exquisite little piece of mechanism. My intent, however, is centred in the mind, the individual rather than the natural history specimen. There was the usual difficulty about feeding. Since the little bird had been captured, he was probably weak and hungry. A few mouthfuls of bread and milk were swallowed reluctantly after his beak had been gently prised open. Then, since I was busy—and for other reasons which have been explained in another article—I placed him under my coat where he could hide and get into tune with human vibrations. Probably if you could have asked him and he could have answered, he would have said he was resting under my wing.

He stayed there for something more than an hour, during which I did many things, taking no notice of him except once when I was crossing the garden he put his head out to find out what I was doing.

Finally, I sat down in my study ready to attend to him and out crawled a friendly little creature who was willing to let me feed him. He sat on one arm while I fed him out of a tea-cup with an egg spoon.

LONG NOSED GOBLIN

I called him my "Long Nosed Goblin"; and, since I shall have occasion to refer to him as such, he may be known as L.N.G.

It turned out presently to be a case of dual personality. There is the L.N.G. who just at present is trying to prevent me writing, with inquisitive little beak poking at the pen nib, and there is the frightened little starling who crouches away in a corner and will not let me near him. These two phases or personalities alternate and the change is as quick as lightning. One moment, L.N.G. will be busily preening himself out on my shoulder and the next it will be all starling, taking fright and cowering away in some hiding place. L.N.G. is a product of what came out from under my coat—a little half-human demon full of mischief and fearlessness. The starling proper is what went into my coat, a little savage of the wilderness, morose and timid—a captive.

What will happen is this—L.N.G. will persist so long as he has my companionship, and the starling will gradually become submerged to reappear perhaps when I give him his liberty, if that should become desirable in the future; but in the meantime the Goblin is the predominating personality. At present, the Goblin nature only asserts itself in my presence and here is a sample of its appearance.

I had been feeding L.N.G. quite happily when suddenly the starling took possession, screamed and rushed under the pile of paper in a corner. I took no notice and began writing. The next thing I was aware of was a little thing running about beneath me. I looked down and an upturned little black eye met my gaze. I went on writing. Suddenly, two little claws had reached my shoe, then an inquisitive little beak wrestled with my shoe lace. I still went on writing. Next, a little beak was poked in between my shoe and my ankle. I remained absorbed in my work. The next I knew was a little demon fluttering and climbing

up my leg, on to my knee and then a wicked little head appeared from under the table peeping up to see if I really was going to take no notice. I could not be bothered! And so, with little Long Nose testing each waistcoat button, the goblin fluttered and struggled up my waistcoat until it reached my chin. One vicious dab knocked this out of the way and it had gained my shoulder.

A very gentle peck and a slight twist of my ear was the next experiment and, finding this brought no great disaster, it started an attack in real earnest. This *did* attract some attention and it was off down my other arm and away to the inkpot. A hurried dip into the inkpot with the long black bill, and a shake of the head flung ink drops where they could do most damage, one leap on to the pen tray scattered the pens in all directions, a pause with head on one side to consider the extent of destruction and then a flying leap on to the pile of papers, a hurried glissade over an avalanche of important documents arranged for filing and a tumble on to the floor, round the table leg and up kind master's trousers fluttering and clawing back to his shoulder and so up to the bald dome on top of kind master. Down on to the type-writer bars. From there on to the paste pot, a hurried attempt to pull out the paste brush and then with sticky little claws up master's arm on to his head again.

A quick leap from head to elbow, a short preliminary scratch and the wicked little head is tucked away quite peacefully and trusting while perched in the crook of a human elbow.

DUAL PERSONALITY

Can this be a wild starling only just caught?

No, of course not, while this little spirit of mischief is gamboling about in perfect enjoyment of human companionship, something else is submerged in the background, something wholly distrustful of humanity, a little starling savage.

What is the secret of this dual personality? Are there indeed two different little spirits trying to inhabit the one body?

Wait one moment. Out comes the little head from under the wing and with one shriek of terror the wild starling has taken possession and will not suffer me near him.

Days pass, the little starling has grown accustomed to the study where it is allowed to hop about freely. It has grown accustomed to the human being, its fellow prisoner, always engaged in writing or thumping the typewriter. The wing is getting on nicely and the three large cages near the window, each with their door wide open, make fine places to go exploring into when not used as jumping grounds to take off from and test the progress of the injured wing.

Yes, the little starling is gradually getting tame but alas the Long Nosed Goblin, the fearless little creature who would romp up and down my arm and seize the pen nib has practically faded away.

What is the meaning of this? Above all, what has all this about a tame starling got to do with Spiritualism?

Well, without some theory of survival and without a knowledge of facts connected with Spiritualism, the sequence of incident would be inexplicable.

Years ago, there was just such another Long Nosed Goblin, a little starling which had been brought up from infancy. He indeed had no fear; together we would scramble round the garden looking for insects in the flower borders or he would spy my wife looking out of an upstairs window and, moth like, would flutter up to her call. That of course is another story. A cat pounced upon him and killed him years ago—one of these cats which the neighbours keep and allow to prowl around doing damage all day long.

Anyhow, the real Long Nosed Goblin "fell out of
(Continued at foot of next column.)

“POWER” ON CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

Professor Shastri, D.Litt., presided at the Service in the Fortune Theatre on Sunday evening. There were many interesting and notable people among the audience and the Countess of Portsmouth brought a party of friends to hear “Power.” Miss Norah B. Burgess accompanied on the organ.

“Power” gave an interesting address, taking the birth of Jesus Christ and the Christmas festival as his theme. He pointed out that if this birth had been miraculous in the way taught by the Roman Catholic Church it would have taken from the real humanity of Christ and therefore His influence would have been nullified to a great extent. He also explained the different ways the Christmas Festival is kept in the various spheres on the other side of life.

SPIRITUALISM AND ITS CRITICS

Mrs. Ch. de Crespigny recently addressed the Jewish Society for Psychic Research on “Spiritualism and the Critics.”

There was evidence, she said, of strong influences at work to undermine Spiritualism, and subtle attacks were more destructive than attacks made in the open.

There was a good deal, however, in the criticism of the Theosophists, who objected to depending on communication through a Medium on the ground that it was better to develop their own faculties of consciousness and raise them to a higher level. Spiritualism was really valuable because it gave something that could be proved.

PHYSICS OF PSYCHIC SCIENCE

On Tuesday and Wednesday last week, an interesting lecture and demonstration was given at the British College of Psychic Science, London, by Mr. A. J. Ashdown (Gold Medallist, International Invention Exhibition, 1924) on the Physics of Psychic Science. He showed, through various instruments and devices, how valuable a certain scientific knowledge was in the investigation of psychical phenomena, both in their furtherance and in the detection of fraud.

One interesting exhibit was an invention of his own, the Rotoscope, now used all over the world for bringing an object in rapid motion to an apparent standstill. Mr. Ashdown is the technical adviser to the “Reflectograph,” which he has watched throughout its development.

(Continued from previous column.)

correspondence with Nature,” as Huxley describes it, some three years ago. But did he fall out of correspondence with his human friends? Is not that rather a wonderful question? And is it not answered in this present experiment?

Who or what possessed this little injured starling, full grown and helpless, after it had rested about an hour or so “under my wing.” Even now, when the food pot is empty and I have been quietly writing and paying no attention, the little starling under the influence of some strange confidential urge, will hop down and hesitating, prettily approach my hand. If I still take no notice he will come up and place one claw on my arm and look up, it is Long Nosed Goblin in an emergency not quite faded out.

Of all bird types that I know, I should say the starling was most likely to be subject to psychic influence and for my own part I have little doubt that this is my little friend of three years ago, not lost, but gone before.

This experiment is worth thinking over. Not long ago we had photographic evidence given to us by Lady Slater in the case of the Wolfhound “Tara” and its departed friend “Kathal” a cairn puppy.

Our departed pets *do* survive, on the evidence available.

HISTORY OR PARABLE?

By W. H. EVANS

I HAVE been asked whether, in my opinion, the story of the birth, life and death of Jesus is a historical event, or an Eastern story symbolising the awakening and unfolding of the human soul?

The life of Jesus recorded in the gospels is not complete. It merely records his birth, his experience in the temple, and his three years’ ministry. It is a broken and fragmentary record. The stories clustered around his birth are all of a psychic nature. Whether they are actual experiences critics are uncertain, but they do not affect the historicity of Jesus.

The greatness of Jesus is independent of the miraculous happenings recorded in his life. The majesty of His Presence does not depend upon miracle, but upon his definite and clear realisation of being an expression in form of “the Father.”

Although of the Jewish race, He reveals a wider and more comprehensive vision than is found in Judaism. He is the prophet of humanity and not of a particular people. The Gospel of Mark reveals in many instances the observations of an onlooker, of one who was an associate of Jesus, and we can accept the record as having an historical basis revealing the life of a living man.

But this story of His life as recorded is also parabolic. Some regard it as a Solar myth—Jesus being the Sun and the disciples representing the twelve signs of the Zodiac; the birth, passion, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension, being all a solar drama. There is in this something very suggestive. It is as if God spread upon the heavens the symbol of man’s birth and progress through the various kingdoms.

Take the story of the life of Jesus as a parable and it becomes a chart whereby we may guide, and at the same time watch the progress of our own developing consciousness.

Thus the birth of Jesus in the stable becomes the symbol of the birth in our soul of the Christ-consciousness. That is, there is born in us a realisation of “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” But this first realisation is often feeble; being as helpless as a new born babe and dependent upon others for nurture; and unless there is humility, that consciousness may be still-born. It must be nursed into vigour and power; watched over as a tender plant, so that it may become strong and vigorous and able to resist the temptations of the world.

Between the birth of the Christ-consciousness and its triumph in the resurrection is a period of thirty-three years. This is by some regarded as the thirty-three steps of initiation in the spiritual life, but for the average man the thing that matters is the knowledge that once the consciousness of union with God is born in him, he can, if he will, grow more and more into God-likeness, and all the other experiences will be seen as trials of strength. The Adversary will be with us on our journey, but we shall regard him not as an enemy, but as one with a definite task; to try us and test our powers of strength and endurance. The way may lead to Gethsemane, to Golgotha and the tomb, but beyond is the resurrection and the glory of the ascending life. If we can see this in the record of that life, will it not be for us a constant inspiration?

CHESHUNT AND HERTFORD SPIRITUALISTS
To the Editor of Light,

Sir,—It is desired to get in touch with Spiritualists in Cheshunt and Hertford, and it has been suggested that as the local press does not seem to be read by those interested, it might be possible to get in touch with them through your paper. It is desired to start Spiritualist meetings in these towns and I wonder whether you would be so good as to co-operate with us by insertion of such a notice?

E. SHURLY.

Pilatus, Park Street Lane, Near St. Albans.

STORY OF SPONTANEOUS MATERIALISATION

MR. D. O. SMITH, of 56, Thurston Road, Pontypridd, Glamorgan, sends us the outline of a story of spontaneous materialisation which, if fully authenticated, would rank as a most convincing proof of Survival and of the possibility of after-death appearances in objective life-like form.

Efforts have been made to secure full authentication, but, for the present, these efforts have not been successful. The story is therefore presented with reserve, and readers are asked to draw their own conclusions as to its credibility.

The story, briefly stated, is that a young doctor was killed on the eve of his marriage, some eight years ago; that three months after his death, he appeared in fully-materialised form to the young woman he was to have married; and that thereafter at frequent intervals—sometimes twice a day—he appeared at her home and at the home of his parents, where occasionally he took food.

Mr. Smith says he was first told of the materialisations by a friend—a council employee whose name he gives—and, in order to sift the story, he made several journeys to Cardiff where he interviewed a Mr. B. (whose full name and address are given), who stated that he had frequently witnessed the occurrences, but was not at liberty to give the names or addresses of the people chiefly concerned. Only a few of the Doctor's most intimate friends had been permitted to see the materialisations.

The story, therefore, lacks the authentication of the chief actors; but it is vouched for by Mr. B., who, in a letter to Mr. Smith said he would not, personally, mind giving a detailed account; but as the matter did not directly concern him, and his friends state that they do not wish it to be discussed, he feels he would be taking an undue liberty if he did so. "I have," he adds, "told you much more than anyone else, because I know no Spiritualists—and non-Spiritualists could not normally be expected to understand or believe."

Mr. Smith writes that, "judging by Mr. B.'s honesty and earnestness, and the long period of time the materialisations have been witnessed, the story has the appearance of truth." Mr. B.'s letter to Mr. Smith is now in the possession of the Editor of LIGHT.

MR. B.'s STATEMENT

The story, as told by Mr. B. at various interviews—at some of which Mrs. Smith was present—is given by Mr. Smith as follows:

"About eight years ago," Mr. B. began, "I had a friend, a surgeon, who was engaged to be married. They were a fine, loving, happy couple. The Doctor was a strong, healthy man of strong personality, a Catholic. Unfortunately, he lost his life as a result of a motor accident, two days before the date for the marriage. He was duly buried with all the formalities of the Roman Catholic faith.

"Some three months later, his fiancée was walking with a few friends when the Doctor suddenly appeared by her side. The lady almost collapsed when the Doctor, fully materialised, slapped her on the shoulder and spoke to her. Evidently he did not remain long. He walked away, saying, 'I must go now,' and disappeared round a corner.

"From that day onward, the Doctor materialised. There was no Medium or circle used. He often ate and drank with his friends. Sometimes he appeared at the home of his fiancée but more often at his parents' home. This usually occurred at night.

"Sometimes he sent apports such as rare fruit not obtainable in this country at the time. On other occasions he dropped a letter from space.

"The Doctor talks, very much as, according to report, other progressive spirits have done for many years. He says he is very busy; using his knowledge and skill on the spirit side of life. On one occasion he said he had just returned from work for victims of a railway wreck

in America. He looks himself, yet thinner. He has been photographed, materialised, at his home. He is able to give his friends news in advance of the daily press, and the news has been verified in the paper later."

Mr. B. added that on various occasions the Doctor, when materialised at his parents' home, rang him (Mr. B.) up and talked with him on the telephone.

Here are a few questions put by Mr. Smith and Mr. B.'s answers:

Q—What was the first of these occurrences you saw?

A—I was sitting with the Doctor's parents with my back to a fireguard—there was no fire—when we heard a dog, apparently coming down the stairs. Soon came the sound of the dog putting his feet up on the fireguard and a letter fell at my feet addressed "To Mother."

Q—Was this in daylight?

A—No, but the light was full on in the room. (The Doctor's Alsatian dog died about the same time as the Doctor was killed).

Q—When was the last time you saw the Doctor materialise and vanish in your presence?

A—Eighteen months ago. He comes fully clothed. He is just a man exactly as other men with all his faculties. I have never heard or read of any phenomenon that compares with it. Yet I dare not mention even a little of what we have seen to outsiders, as they hint or suggest I am losing my balance.

Q—What does the Doctor's mother think of these appearances? Does she consider herself a rather fortunate woman?

A—At first she was greatly disturbed, and astonished. Even now, she is not entirely reconciled or quite clear about it all.

Q—Has the doctor's fiancée remained single?

A—Yes, she knows he is alive.

Q—About how long does the form remain?

A—Sometimes just a few moments, at other times he sits down and eats and remains some time. Sometimes he appears twice in one day. Then he may not come for a day or two and sometimes he misses several days. In the last year or two, he appears at much longer intervals.

Mr. Smith adds that he took notes of Mr. B.'s statements at the interviews; and his friend, the council employee, says that the above agrees in substance with what Mr. B. had told him.

A THOUGHT FOR YULE TIDE

There is a pretty legend of Christmas Eve, told by Kipling in verse, and coming down from Saxon times, about a priest of St. Wilfred, named Eddi, and how he rang the bell at midnight, but no one came. The altar candles were lighted, however, and the service proceeded, until "an old marsh donkey" came wandering in and stared at the flame, and then "a wet yoke-weary bullock" pushed through the open door. With Eddi himself, these made three gathered together; and to them he preached the good news, telling the ox "of a Rider that rode to Jerusalem."

It is indeed a fair thought that links not only angels and sages and a mighty star, but the "humble beasts" as well, with the coming of this little Child, who loved all living things. Possibly the giving, rather than the taking, of their lives, may come to be the means some day of celebrating Christmas. What a day that would be for them! And immeasurable sufferings of other kinds would also cease if men were everywhere minded to have it so, and to follow out the behests of a holy and loving spirit in all their world-wide dealings with each other. But, as we know, the kingdoms of this world are moving nearer, however slowly, to their destined and inevitable redemption.

F.E.L.

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One is reminded of the remark of Galileo in his letter to the Astronomer, Kepler: "What thinkest thou Kepler? They will not look through my instrument!"

Writers in the religious papers have for a considerable time been saying that Sir Oliver Lodge was not adverse to the idea of the resurrection of the mortal body, and the said papers welcomed the statement and published it eagerly and repeatedly. Recently, I was at some pains to ascertain the truth of this statement, and found that Sir Oliver does *not* believe in the resurrection of the mortal or physical body. I at once wrote to the religious papers and gave them the proof of this and they have steadily refused to publish it.

What shall be said of such mental obliquity and dishonesty?

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Daily I wonder at the long-continued sacrifice of these Guides and can see no explanation save that the hard, unsympathetic and self-satisfied sinner must arouse in them something akin to the passion of pity the Salvationist feels for a huddled bundle of destitution on the Embankment.

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Possibly it is due to our want of self-control that we fail to arrive at clear conditions, enabling the communicators from the Beyond to express themselves as lucidly as we should like. For myself, as a healer, I have been told by several clairvoyants that I have several

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The consumption of bloodless food, as the gift of God, is quite compatible with a reasonable conception of Heaven, but the eating of food obtainable only by the slaughter of highly sentient creatures is a mockery of Love, and incompatible with belief in the infinite mercy of God.

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Your correspondent rightly says that "the Kingdom of God is within you"—hence, if Love in the hearts of thousands of people at the present time dictates attention to such practical matters as food and feeding, it is useless to refer to what the Master did under entirely different conditions two thousand years ago.

Every Spiritualist is, of course, entitled to his own opinions, but I cannot believe that it is a service to Spiritualism to attack any other movement which seeks to ameliorate the lot of the weak and the helpless.

Nobody likes cranks, but it is perfectly possible to be in sympathy with the movements which have been enumerated, and yet to remain as sane, humorous and human as the mythical man in the street. It is all summed up in one word—tolerance.

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These remarks have not, of course, any personal application; but encounters with such have probably been within the experience of most of us, more frequently within the ranks of the opponents of Spiritualism.

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Mr. Joseph Blower, of Edendale, Royal Avenue, Oucham, Isle of Man, wishes to get in touch with other Spiritualists in the Island. He has, he writes, been a regular reader of *LIGHT* for years and finds it invaluable.

INVERSION OF TIME AND SPACE

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOME NEGLECTED SPECULATIONS

BY DR. NANDOR FODOR

IN his quest for a theory to explain the phenomena of haunted houses, F. W. H. Myers threw out the speculation that the perception may be retrocognition owing to some curious, local inversion of time. He must have meant that the perception is as if a piece of personal history were continually projected into the present with the very features of its first and *only* occurrence.

I believe that the importance of this speculation has not been sufficiently recognised. Admitting, for the sake of reasoning, that supernormal knowledge of past events may be brought about by an inversion of time we have changed the subjective character of phenomena of the clairvoyant and psychometric order and have transferred them from the domain of *psychology* into that of *physics*. That achievement alone would be a sufficient justification for any bold theory. But there are other, and still more important considerations.

HAUNTING FORESHADOWED

If time, for mysterious reasons, may become inverted, it is difficult to preclude the possibility that future events may be similarly transferred into the present. It follows that a house could be haunted by its future inhabitants too. Strange as the notion may be, there are unclassified psychical experiences, foreshadowings of the future, which appear to support it. Princess Karadja quotes in the *Zeitschrift für Metapsychische Forschung*, March 15, 1931, the following incident in the life of the late Count Buerger Moerner:

"Passing through the little garden and glancing in at the window as he approached the house (looking for public refreshment) the Count was horrified to see the body of an old woman hanging from a ceiling beam. He burst into the room with a cry of horror, but once across the threshold was stunned with amazement to find the old woman rising startled from her chair, demanding the reason of his surprising intrusion. No hanging body was to be seen and the old lady herself was not only very much alive but indignant as well . . . Some days later, being again in that locality, he decided to visit the hut once more, curious to see if by some peculiarity of the window pane, he might not have been observing an optical illusion. Nearing the hut through the garden as before, the same terrible sight met his eye. This time, however, the Count stood for some minutes studying the picture; then after some hesitation, knocked at the door. No answer, even to repeated knocks, until at length Count Moerner opened the door and entered, to find what he saw this time was no vision. The old woman's body was indeed hanging from the beam. She had committed suicide."

The Mrs. McAlpine case in the Report on the Census of Hallucinations (Proc. S.P.R., Vol. X, p. 332) is similar. Speaking of a solitary excursion to a lake, she wrote:

"My attention was quite taken up with the extreme beauty of the scene before me. There was not a sound or movement, except the soft ripple of the water on the sand at my feet. Presently I felt a cold chill creep through me, and a curious stiffness of my limbs, as if I could not move, though wishing to do so. I felt frightened, yet chained to the spot, and as if impelled to stare at the water in front of me. Gradually a black cloud seemed to rise, and in the midst of it I saw a tall man, in a suit of tweed, jump into the water and sink. In a moment the darkness was gone, and I again became sensible of the heat and sunshine, but I was awed and felt eerie . . . A week afterwards Mr. Espie, a bank clerk (unknown to me), committed suicide by drowning in that very spot.

He left a letter for his wife, indicating that he had for some time contemplated his death."

But there are other aspects of the problem than haunting. Granted that inversion of time is possible, the phenomenon of prevision lose much of their baffling nature. Precognition and retrocognition, like Janus, the double faced, will be shown to be the same thing under different appearance. This simplification is very significant as it will make the problem of free will independent of the possibility of predicting future events. Let us say, for a clearer understanding, that this inversion of time is nothing less than a fourth dimensional view, that it is possible for the human spirit to occupy an observation post, a vantage point in the fourth dimension and look down on the film of life. Such contemplation would obviously in no way interfere with human actions and would simply mean a timeless mental grasp of life as a finished whole, the perception of the future section involving nothing more marvellous than the perception of past sections. And if a seer, by supernormal perception of my past, cannot have any influence over events which my will had shaped, why should the supernormal perception of my future be bound up with the problem of free will? Perception and causation are different concepts. My past is not perceived because it was determined but because it is there. Similarly, my future will not be perceived because it is foreordained but because, in a sense, it is there for the seer, as a result of all my actions as a free agent.

A TWIST IN SPACE

I contend that this speculation is legitimate. But the starting point, the inversion of time, will remain vague if we cannot shed more light on it. Myers himself was conscious of its weakness and hastened to support it with another, still more courageous assumption: his theory of psychorrhagic diathesis. The formidable phrase means: the breaking loose of the soul, an ability to detach psychic elements which produce phantasmogenetic effects on the mind of another person or on a portion of space, in which case several persons may simultaneously discern phantasmal appearances. I place particular emphasis on this affecting of space. No theory was yet produced which came so near to the understanding of the nature of apparitions as this. I believe Myers meant that space can be twisted, that the human spirit is capable of inverting it into the fourth dimension. It sounds weird, but the question is whether such a theory lends itself to the explanation of mediumistic phenomena. In many ways, I believe it does. The loss of weight, for instance, may be the result of an inversion of space: *the object acts as if it had been brought nearer to the centre of gravity*. Of course, I hear the objection that we know that this loss of weight is only seeming because it is the Medium and the sitters who demonstrably bear the difference in weight. But what about the levitation of the human body? No cantilever theory can explain this fact. If the human body can be levitated by some unknown and untraceable psychic force there is nothing to bar the possibility that the same force will be occasionally employed for the lesser purpose of lifting smaller objects.

I am not prepared to say that levitation is due to an inversion of space, *to the action of the human body as if it were in the centre of gravity*, but the speculation is an interesting one and justifies the query whether it may not offer less violence to the understanding than, for instance, the fact of apports does. If we do not adopt the molecular infiltration theory (with a disintegration and reintegration of the object) we must take a jump into Zollner's fourth dimension, which amounts to the same as speaking of an inversion of space.

On the basis of this speculation there does not seem to be any difference, not even in degree, between apports

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CHRISTMAS—THE GREY AND THE GOLD

YULE-TIDE, for our forefathers, came in with the crackle of Yule logs and much of eating and drinking. The roast beef was on the board, flanked by flagons of wine. The mummers were abroad, and the holly and mistle-toe hung in the great hall. The peer and the peasant mingled for once on terms of equality. The minstrels played ; the jester cracked his jokes and there was high festival everywhere, with profuse hospitality in which the "poor man at the gate" was never forgotten.

Times change and we change with them. As the years went by, the primitive customs were altered to suit an increasing refinement of taste. Yule-tide became more sober (in every sense) and the primitive methods of keeping the feast went out of fashion. Science took a hand in the work by revolutionising the means of travel and providing mechanical sources of comfort, convenience and entertainment of which our ancestors could never have dreamed. The automobile banished the stage coach ; the gramophone and the radio brought music into the humblest homes.

And yet—all is not well with us.

Mechanism brought many boons, but it also brought much that we would rather be without. It complicated life, and expelled from it many of the old, simple human things that accorded better with the heart than with the brain. And of late the machine has threatened to become our tyrant instead of our slave.

It swept many things away, but happily Christmas was not of them. That was too deeply rooted in human affections. It remains with us, and even to-day, though it is more than usually shorn of its old splendours by reason of world-penury—the after-math of much senseless prodigality—it still stands as a light in the darkness,

weaving some gold strands into the grey and tangled yarn of our lives.

For many of us it is a time of reunion in more than the ancient meaning of the word. The annual gathering of the separated members of the family-circle is found to be a larger event than we formerly supposed. Those who have passed beyond the bourne still remember our times and seasons and re-visit us, gathering unseen, but not always unsuspected, around the Christmas fire. They are the "viewless guests," giving a newer and brighter meaning to the old tradition of Christmas ghosts.

To-day we need their presence more than ever. for the world has become very bleak for many of us. It is wintry weather in more than the sense of the changing seasons of the year. In the dearth of mundane satisfaction we would fain be companioned and consoled by those who have passed beyond the shadow of our night, and who can tell us of that better country to which they have preceded us. So may we realise the truth of George Herbert's line that "man is one world and hath another to attend him."

We know it is no dream—no fairy figment of a poet's brain. The cynic, the pedant, the sceptic may scoff—let them. They are the Scrooges who have yet to learn the lesson taught to Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens's story, by the Christmas Ghosts.

The "unseen guests"—unseen save to the clairvoyant eye—are with us at Christmas-tide and their presence can enrich the scantiest feast, tingeing the grey of our mortal life with a celestial gold.

THE HIDDEN SPLENDOUR

The waning year discloses
Its changes as of old :
The passing of the roses,
The coming of the cold ;
The alchemy of Winter-time—
Dull lead where once was gold.

The lane with leafless hedges ;
The bleak and swampy downs ;
The mere with withered sedges ;
The murky streets in towns,
Beset with rainy smotherings,
Gaunt greys and gloomy browns.

'Twere all but as a curtain
That masks the life beneath,
Which, slow but ever certain,
Will yet, from husk and sheath,
Bring leaf and flower and fruit again
And flush once more the heath.

'Neath Summer's utmost glory
A greater glory lies.
The poet knows the story
Unread by duller eyes—
The rays "beyond the violet,"
The sky beyond the skies.

D.G.

SIDELIGHTS

CHANGING ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS.

It is a sign of the changing attitude of the Press to Mediumship and Spiritualism, that *The Times* has given a long and sympathetic review of Mrs. Osborne Leonard's book *My Life in Two Worlds* (Cassell, 7/6), to which the attention of the readers of *LIGHT* has been repeatedly directed. "This is a book," says *The Times* reviewer, "which not only is interesting in itself as a narrative but which brings us face to face with many deep problems. There seems no reason to doubt the author's good faith. Mrs. Osborne Leonard has been before the public as a professional Medium for close on twenty years. Nearly all those who are most prominently connected with psychical research, whether their tendencies be sceptical or the reverse, have had sittings with her, and no one, so far as we are aware, has impugned her honesty or disparaged her psychic gifts. For a time a detective agency was employed to keep her under observation and to see whether she made any attempt to get up the antecedents of those who came to consult her. But the report was negative; nothing was discovered suggesting ground for suspicion. On the other hand, some very remarkable cases of supernormal knowledge are connected with her mediumship."

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ENTIRELY HER OWN.

Commenting on a suggestion contained in the review of her book, Mrs. Osborne Leonard, in a letter to the Editor of *The Times*, writes: "I should like to state that the book is entirely my own work from start to finish. No one edited it or helped me in any way—in fact, no one saw the manuscript (except the typist) until it was read and accepted by the publisher, who suggested no alterations whatever."

* * *

EVIDENTIAL PSYCHIC "EXTRA."

The problems of psychic photography—to which attention is being directed anew by the analytical lectures of Mr. J. B. M'Indoe, President of the Spiritualists' National Union—are amongst the subjects dealt with in much detail, by the Rev. C. L. Tweedale, in his monumental work *Man's Survival After Death*. Like Mr. M'Indoe, Mr. Tweedale takes the ground that genuine supernormal photographic "extras" have repeatedly been obtained; and he advances several cases that have come within his own observation in support of the contention that these "extras" may be evidential of Survival. One of these, secured through the mediumship of Mr. Hope at Weston Vicarage, Yorkshire—and reproduced in the fourth and enlarged edition of the book, recently published—is believed to represent Sir William Crookes. After describing the condition in which the "extra" was obtained, Mr. Tweedale (in an appendix note) says:—"This spirit face has been recognised by relatives of Sir William; by his doctor and the doctor's wife; by Mr. Thomas Blyton, who was associated with Sir William for thirty years; and finally, Sir Oliver Lodge, who knew him personally, says of it: 'The face might well represent a younger portrait of Crookes.'" On this subject, as on others connected with evidences of Survival, Mr. Tweedale's book gives invaluable assistance to the student.

* * *

WAS IT DAN LENO?

Stanley Lupino, the popular entertainer, tells in *Tit-Bits* how on several occasions he saw the "ghost" of Dan Leno. "The last occasion," he writes, "was the most startling of all, for it was at night, and I was by myself. Owing to an unusually heavy fall of snow, I was unable to reach my home, and so decided to spend the night in my dressing-room. I had made myself comfortable in a chair, when something made me feel that I was not alone in the room. I looked up from the magazine I was reading, and Dan Leno was standing

before the fire. He was dressed in ordinary old-fashioned clothes, had his hands clasped before him, smiled down at me, and—I thought—seemed anxious to tell me something. He rocked himself slowly backward and forward, as though wondering how to start the conversation. Then he appeared to change his mind, for he walked across the room, and before my very eyes apparently *passed through the closed door*. For all that I heard him slam it, and a second later the sound was repeated as though the outer door had also been closed."

* * *

THE APPARITION AND THE LETTERS.

That wrongs may be righted by means of mediumistic action is suggested in a story told by Judge Ludvig Dahl (Norway) in his book, *We are Here* (Riders 7/6) to which reference has previously been made in *LIGHT*. An apparition having been frequently seen at the house of Dr. Th. Wereide, reader in physics at the University of Oslo, Judge Dahl's daughter, Ingeborg, was asked to intervene. She did so, and in a trance was led by the apparition to a remote part of the house, where two faded letters were dropped mysteriously into her hands from some place where they had lain hidden. Without being opened, the letters were burned and then, speaking through Ingeborg, the spirit-visitant said: "Now, I have attained what I have been working for through ages. It concerns a lady's honour which was in danger whilst those letters still lay there. I myself was responsible for it. I quite understand that you would like to have read the contents of the letters, but then my work would have been in vain." Here "an apparition" is described as having a purpose, as working for it and as rejoicing when it was accomplished—a purpose relating to something he had done before passing over to the "land of shades," and which could only be accomplished through the help of someone who has the power of "discerning spirits."

* * *

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

A discussion on "prayers for the dead" has been carried on in the columns of the *Glasgow Herald*. Mr. Duncan Campbell, who is well-known to Glasgow Spiritualists, writes: "I consider that prayer for the so called dead is very necessary and most essential, and should be incorporated into the Church service. The Church of Christ is a spiritual Church, and man is a spiritual being encased in a material body. The Church was not instituted by Christ for the material body of man. It was for his spiritual body, and the development of that spiritual body in this world so that it might be better fitted to enter the next world. There is no death. It is only casting off the material body. The spirit passes on, and, if a member of Christ's Church on earth, will be a member of Christ's Church in the next world. Therefore as the spirit is just the same after passing, why should it not require the prayers of those still on earth? The spirit after entering the next world is not taken at once into God's presence."

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

YESTERDAY.

"The Roman Catholics have a curious, and rather ingenious method of accounting for the extraordinary phenomena of Animal Magnetism. When they are produced by a priest or saint of their own church, they are the work of God; when by a Protestant, or a member of any other persuasion, they are the work of the devil."

Animal Magnetism, by J. C. Colquhoun, F.R.S.E.
Pub. 1836.)

TO-DAY.

For "Animal Magnetism" read "Spiritualism." The more things change, the more they are the same.

H. ERNEST HUNT.

INVERSION OF TIME AND SPACE

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOME NEGLECTED SPECULATIONS

BY DR. NANDOR FODOR

IN his quest for a theory to explain the phenomena of haunted houses, F. W. H. Myers threw out the speculation that the perception may be retrocognition owing to some curious, local inversion of time. He must have meant that the perception is as if a piece of personal history were continually projected into the present with the very features of its first and *only* occurrence.

I believe that the importance of this speculation has not been sufficiently recognised. Admitting, for the sake of reasoning, that supernormal knowledge of past events may be brought about by an inversion of time we have changed the subjective character of phenomena of the clairvoyant and psychometric order and have transferred them from the domain of *psychology* into that of *physics*. That achievement alone would be a sufficient justification for any bold theory. But there are other, and still more important considerations.

HAUNTING FORESHADOWED

If time, for mysterious reasons, may become inverted, it is difficult to preclude the possibility that future events may be similarly transferred into the present. It follows that a house could be haunted by its future inhabitants too. Strange as the notion may be, there are unclassified psychical experiences, foreshadowings of the future, which appear to support it. Princess Karadja quotes in the *Zeitschrift für Metapsychische Forschung*, March 15, 1931, the following incident in the life of the late Count Buerger Moerner:

"Passing through the little garden and glancing in at the window as he approached the house (looking for public refreshment) the Count was horrified to see the body of an old woman hanging from a ceiling beam. He burst into the room with a cry of horror, but once across the threshold was stunned with amazement to find the old woman rising startled from her chair, demanding the reason of his surprising intrusion. No hanging body was to be seen and the old lady herself was not only very much alive but indignant as well . . . Some days later, being again in that locality, he decided to visit the hut once more, curious to see if by some peculiarity of the window pane, he might not have been observing an optical illusion. Nearing the hut through the garden as before, the same terrible sight met his eye. This time, however, the Count stood for some minutes studying the picture; then after some hesitation, knocked at the door. No answer, even to repeated knocks, until at length Count Moerner opened the door and entered, to find what he saw this time was no vision. The old woman's body was indeed hanging from the beam. She had committed suicide."

The Mrs. McAlpine case in the Report on the Census of Hallucinations (Proc. S.P.R., Vol. X, p. 332) is similar. Speaking of a solitary excursion to a lake, she wrote:

"My attention was quite taken up with the extreme beauty of the scene before me. There was not a sound or movement, except the soft ripple of the water on the sand at my feet. Presently I felt a cold chill creep through me, and a curious stiffness of my limbs, as if I could not move, though wishing to do so. I felt frightened, yet chained to the spot, and as if impelled to stare at the water in front of me. Gradually a black cloud seemed to rise, and in the midst of it I saw a tall man, in a suit of tweed, jump into the water and sink. In a moment the darkness was gone, and I again became sensible of the heat and sunshine, but I was awed and felt eerie . . . A week afterwards Mr. Espie, a bank clerk (unknown to me), committed suicide by drowning in that very spot.

He left a letter for his wife, indicating that he had for some time contemplated his death."

But there are other aspects of the problem than haunting. Granted that inversion of time is possible, the phenomenon of prevision lose much of their baffling nature. Precognition and retrocognition, like Janus, the double faced, will be shown to be the same thing under different appearance. This simplification is very significant as it will make the problem of free will independent of the possibility of predicting future events. Let us say, for a clearer understanding, that this inversion of time is nothing less than a fourth dimensional view, that it is possible for the human spirit to occupy an observation post, a vantage point in the fourth dimension and look down on the film of life. Such contemplation would obviously in no way interfere with human actions and would simply mean a timeless mental grasp of life as a finished whole, the perception of the future section involving nothing more marvellous than the perception of past sections. And if a seer, by supernormal perception of my past, cannot have any influence over events which my will had shaped, why should the supernormal perception of my future be bound up with the problem of free will? Perception and causation are different concepts. My past is not perceived because it was determined but because it is there. Similarly, my future will not be perceived because it is foreordained but because, in a sense, it is there for the seer, as a result of all my actions as a free agent.

A TWIST IN SPACE

I contend that this speculation is legitimate. But the starting point, the inversion of time, will remain vague if we cannot shed more light on it. Myers himself was conscious of its weakness and hastened to support it with another, still more courageous assumption: his theory of psychorrhagic diathesis. The formidable phrase means: the breaking loose of the soul, an ability to detach psychic elements which produce phantasmogenetic effects on the mind of another person or on a portion of space, in which case several persons may simultaneously discern phantasmal appearances. I place particular emphasis on this affecting of space. No theory was yet produced which came so near to the understanding of the nature of apparitions as this. I believe Myers meant that space can be twisted, that the human spirit is capable of inverting it into the fourth dimension. It sounds weird, but the question is whether such a theory lends itself to the explanation of mediumistic phenomena. In many ways, I believe it does. The loss of weight, for instance, may be the result of an inversion of space: *the object acts as if it had been brought nearer to the centre of gravity*. Of course, I hear the objection that we know that this loss of weight is only seeming because it is the Medium and the sitters who demonstrably bear the difference in weight. But what about the levitation of the human body? No cantilever theory can explain this fact. If the human body can be levitated by some unknown and untraceable psychic force there is nothing to bar the possibility that the same force will be occasionally employed for the lesser purpose of lifting smaller objects.

I am not prepared to say that levitation is due to an inversion of space, *to the action of the human body as if it were in the centre of gravity*, but the speculation is an interesting one and justifies the query whether it may not offer less violence to the understanding than, for instance, the fact of apports does. If we do not adopt the molecular infiltration theory (with a disintegration and reintegration of the object) we must take a jump into Zollner's fourth dimension, which amounts to the same as speaking of an inversion of space.

On the basis of this speculation there does not seem to be any difference, not even in degree, between apports

and telekinetic movements. The space between the distant object and the Medium, in a flash of thaumaturgic psychic activity, would become, to all three-dimensional intents and purposes, annihilated, and the Medium's extremities would move the faraway object in a natural manner. This would rule out the existence of pseudopods, ectoplasmic limbs, psychic rods, etc. They would appear to be simple fourth-dimensional reflections of a natural motor action and have no more objective existence than an image in a mirror has. To point out an analogy: let us suppose that while I am sitting at the breakfast-table time will suddenly become inverted for twenty-four hours and I would eat tomorrow's bacon with today's eggs. Apart from the sudden appearance of the bacon on my table, *a wonderful apport phenomenon*, I would experience nothing particular. But an onlooker who was in no way affected by the inversion process would see *my double devoting itself for 24 hours to interminable slices of bacon* and if he had not witnessed the beginning of my strange adventure he would forgivably speak of *a persistent monition of approach*, whereas in reality my phantasm is an image only, a reflection from timeless space.

The oft-noticed synchronisation between the Medium's movement and of the objects, fits well within the theory. If I were asked how I account for the slight delay which is observable between the twitching of the Medium's limb and the actual stirring of objects I would make a bold guess that the result might be due to a jolt in the process of *perception* or that the precedence of repercussion over the actual motor effect may be attributable to unknown fourth-dimensional complexities.

THE GATE AJAR

According to Myers, it is the human spirit which could affect space. One would have to ask whether it is to be imagined as a conscious operation or whether it may be brought about by accident. Haunting is often aimless, automatic, a "dream of the dead." Were we to pursue the argument we would have to say that in such cases the inversion of space, by certain dissociated soul-elements, is accidental and establishes contact with a departed spirit without its knowledge, or in a dreamy sort of way. But there are other questions to ask as well. If it is possible to open up an avenue from the fourth-dimensional world into this three-dimensional one by an inversion of space may it not be that through the breach natural forces which belong to that higher world will flow independently of post-human action, and produce, under subsequent manipulation, phenomenal results? Perhaps the astounding effects of the dark seance-room which cannot be dynamometrically accounted for are due to such an inflow of forces through the breach which has been struck on space by the joint nervous force of the Medium and sitters? We could then define inversion of space as *a condition which permits the inflow of fourth-dimensional natural and intelligent forces into the three-dimensional world*.

I may be reproved for allowing fantasies to run away with sober thinking. I do not put forward any claim to have discovered something new. I do not say that my roughly outlined theory is tenable. All I wished to demonstrate was that nearly all mediumistic phenomena could be explained in terms of this new speculation and that Richet's cryptesthesia which endows the sensitive mind with near-omniscience, could be easily supplanted by the supposition that all supernormal cognition is the direct result of an *inversion of space or time*. Of course, the weakness of the speculation is that it presupposes the existence of a fourth-dimensional world and the possibility of interaction between the two, and therefore puts the cart before the horse. Still, I believe that it is well to muse over it. I trust that in time all supernormal manifestations will be simplified and unified and who can foretell whether it will not be accomplished by still stranger theories?

RAY'S AND REFLECTIONS

There is a legend concerning the busy editor of a popular magazine who was visited by an author bearing the manuscript of a short story. The story was a pleasant little romance set in an atmosphere of mistletoe, plum-pudding, yule-logs and other seasonable symbols. The editor read and approved the offering. Placing the manuscript in a large envelope marked "Press—Urgent," he said to the author, "Thank you, my dear fellow! Your little tale is just in time for inclusion in my Christmas number which I am now sending to the printers." Then he added, as the visitor rose to depart, "Good-bye! Very cold for August, isn't it?"

* * *

It is a satirical little fable intended to poke gentle fun at editorial customs, for which, however, editors are not to blame. The burdened individuals who direct certain popular periodicals are sometimes forced to prepare their publications many weeks in advance. This is not the case with LIGHT, much of whose contents must be written almost at the last moment. These present lines, however, are being penned some days prior to the great festival, and at the time of writing I am wondering—a trifle pessimistically—if we may, this year, be favoured with *real* Christmas weather.

* * *

Time was when the season of Noël coincided with the welcome appearance of feathery snowflakes, and sunlight glistening on a white world; the carmined holly-berry gleamed blood-red against silvery frost; and there were heartening things to see, and hear, and do—roasted chestnuts, hot punch, mince-pies, the brief but stimulating journey on the ice-borne "sled," with probably a tumble in a waiting snow-drift by way of *finale*. It was all jolly and Pickwickian. I fancy, too, that there was an impudent robin-red-breast which hopped across the snowy carpet, and left quaint tracks—but, I am sometimes tempted to think that Christmas robin lived exclusively in the pages of the illustrated Christmas Annuals; for one rarely sees a Yuletide robin. But he was part of the great tradition, and without the little fellow the picture of Noël would be incomplete. These were pleasant scenes, and their full effect depended on the weather; they demanded icy horizons and the propinquity of white, crisp snow.

* * *

But these things, I fear, belong to the past. Snow at Christmas is a rare luxury, and the marrow-chilling drizzle one half-expects, and frequently gets, is a poor substitute. Newer days bring newer ways. Many of us will join our voices in a carol that flows out of a radio cabinet; for some of us the electric radiator will replace the flaming log, the cock-tail shaker will deputise for the punch-bowl, while those who dance will find the Tango easier to perform than the "Sir Roger." Some may think that the old ways were better, yet I would not go back to them, for the spirit of Christmas resides not in the externals but in the heart—it still dwells there, fragrant as ever, and fortified with an enriching knowledge of life here and hereafter, a knowledge that grows greater with the years. The Christmas ghost story of other days is to-day a new story, with radiant significance. D.G.

ALDERMAN ARTHUR BENNETT

We read with deep regret of the decease of Alderman Bennett, twice Mayor of Warrington and one of its best known public men. He was the author of several books of verse and prose, and made his mark in literary circles. He was an occasional contributor to LIGHT, and an old and valued friend. He passed away at his residence, Paddington House, Near Warrington, at the age of 69.

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It is a satirical little fable intended to poke gentle fun at editorial customs, for which, however, editors are not to blame. The burdened individuals who direct certain popular periodicals are sometimes forced to prepare their publications many weeks in advance. This is not the case with LIGHT, much of whose contents must be written almost at the last moment. These present lines, however, are being penned some days prior to the great festival, and at the time of writing I am wondering—a trifle pessimistically—if we may, this year, be favoured with *real* Christmas weather.

* * *

Time was when the season of Noël coincided with the welcome appearance of feathery snowflakes, and sunlight glistening on a white world; the carmined holly-berry gleamed blood-red against silvery frost; and there were heartening things to see, and hear, and do—roasted chestnuts, hot punch, mince-pies, the brief but stimulating journey on the ice-borne "sled," with probably a tumble in a waiting snow-drift by way of *finale*. It was all jolly and Pickwickian. I fancy, too, that there was an impudent robin-red-breast which hopped across the snowy carpet, and left quaint tracks—but, I am sometimes tempted to think that Christmas robin lived exclusively in the pages of the illustrated Christmas Annuals; for one rarely sees a Yuletide robin. But he was part of the great tradition, and without the little fellow the picture of Noël would be incomplete. These were pleasant scenes, and their full effect depended on the weather; they demanded icy horizons and the propinquity of white, crisp snow.

* * *

But these things, I fear, belong to the past. Snow at Christmas is a rare luxury, and the marrow-chilling drizzle one half-expects, and frequently gets, is a poor substitute. Newer days bring newer ways. Many of us will join our voices in a carol that flows out of a radio cabinet; for some of us the electric radiator will replace the flaming log, the cock-tail shaker will deputise for the punch-bowl, while those who dance will find the Tango easier to perform than the "Sir Roger." Some may think that the old ways were better, yet I would not go back to them, for the spirit of Christmas resides not in the externals but in the heart—it still dwells there, fragrant as ever, and fortified with an enriching knowledge of life here and hereafter, a knowledge that grows greater with the years. The Christmas ghost story of other days is to-day a new story, with radiant significance. D.G.

ALDERMAN ARTHUR BENNETT

We read with deep regret of the decease of Alderman Bennett, twice Mayor of Warrington and one of its best known public men. He was the author of several books of verse and prose, and made his mark in literary circles. He was an occasional contributor to LIGHT, and an old and valued friend. He passed away at his residence, Paddington House, Near Warrington, at the age of 69.

PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY

MR. T. A. R. PURCHAS AND THE CASE OF THE FALCONER BROTHERS

To the Editor of Light.

Sir,—In your issue of Oct. 30th I see a paragraph in "Rays and Reflections," contributed by "D.G.," which refers to the case against the Falconer brothers which has been on trial in the Magistrate's Court here. So far as I am aware, this is the only reference to the case which has appeared in your paper.

"D.G." refers to a remark made by Dr. Lindsay Johnson while giving evidence for the defence: "Psychic photography is like fishing, you never know what you may catch." Applying this to the case, generally, "D.G." says: "In the South African instance, it was the Mediums who were 'caught' by the law." The inference conveyed, whether intended or not, is that the Falconer brothers were "caught" cheating. I say this quite seriously, notwithstanding the "saving clause" added by "D.G.," when he says: "Presumably another of those obscure cases where it is impossible to decide whether the Mediums cheated or not."

Two things must be clearly understood by those who are 6,000 miles from the forum of the trial:

(1) If all the information available at that distance is such accounts of the trial as appeared in our local press, it is absolutely beyond question that no one in London is in a position to form any opinion at all;

(2) As the verdict of the Magistrate's Court was delivered on September 28th, and an appeal against that verdict thereafter entered to a higher Court, which appeal is not likely to be heard until late January or early February, the case is *sub judice*, and no public comments upon the trial in the Magistrate's Court can be made without running the risk of committal for contempt of Court.

Those of us here who are acquainted with *all* the details of the case, from the date of the arrest of the Falconers on July 10th, to the close of the case in the lower Court after a twenty-eight days' trial, are therefore debarred from expressing any opinions about the proceedings until, at least, after delivery of judgment by the Appeal Court.

Possibly you may be aware—in any case it may be stated here—that the sentence of the Magistrates' Court was a fine of £150 for each of the brothers, with the alternative of one year's imprisonment with hard labour. The fines were *at once* paid by a gentleman to whom the Falconers had been entirely unknown before they came to Johannesburg. Their stay here, prior to their arrest, was a bare three weeks. All the belongings of the Falconers—with the exception of their purely personal effects, were impounded by the Police, and are still so held. They were stranded here without means, and literally dependent upon friends just made, for food and shelter.

Arrangements have been made for their return to England, and they left here on their return journey about a week ago, being seen off at the Railway Station by a large crowd of well-wishers, amongst whom were the President of the Spiritualist Union of South Africa, and the Solicitor who had defended them throughout their long trial.

This is all that can *publicly* be said at present.
Rand Club, Johannesburg. T. A. R. PURCHAS.
20th November, 1931.

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A CHRISTMAS PARTY

DESCRIBED BY IVAN COOKE

W. T. STEAD (in spirit) and Miss Estelle Stead were lately host and hostess at a Christmas party given at the Borderland Library at Smith Square, Westminster. Some two hundred and fifty toys, brought by the guests, overflowed the Christmas tree, the tables and every vacant corner.

This, it was understood, was primarily a children's party at which "grown ups" were invited to participate, and the toys—after the spirit children, who were the guests unseen, had "chosen" their "gift,"—were destined for the kiddies of Lambeth.

We, the grown ups, arrived in our dozens, partook of Miss Stead's (and W. T. Stead's) hospitality, sampled the Christmas cake, and then settled down to await the little ones. Lights were lowered, and our hostess spoke a few words appropriate to the Season and the occasion, and two carols were beautifully rendered by Mrs. Smythe. Then "Jenny," the control of Mrs. G. P. Sharplin arrived, and with delight and humour introduced an international concourse of spirit children, brought together apparently to bring home to us the international character of the Season "over there."

Among distinguished visitors of our own nationality came Willy Green, once of Stepney and now promoted, who after greeting us "chose" his toy, a "fast and furious" tin motor-car. Other children then controlled, five or six in all, each with a decided preference for some doll or furry creature; and finally young "Tommy" from Derbyshire, a lad of six of studious temperament, chose a book.

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Croydon.—Broad Green Hall, Handcroft Road, West Croydon.

Sunday, Dec. 27th at 6.30 p.m.	Miss MARY MILLS
Wednesday, Dec. 30th at 7.45 p.m.	No Service

Crouch End Spiritualist Society (National Spiritualist Church)
44, Coleridge Road, Crouch End, N.8.

Sunday, Dec. 27th at 7 p.m.	After Circle.	..	Mrs. CLEGHORN
Thursday, Dec. 31st. at 3 p.m.	No Meeting
" " " at 8 p.m.	Member Workers	..	Social after service
Saturday, Jan. 2nd.	Whist Drive.	..	

The Church of the Spirit, 24a, Church Road, Croydon.

Sunday, Dec. 27th at 11 a.m.	Mr. PERCY O. SCHOLEY
" " 27th, at 6.30 p.m.	" "
Wednesday, Dec. 30th, at 8 p.m.	" "

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